

ES&H UPDATE

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WINTER STORM PREPAREDNESS

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There has not been a winter in Illinois this century without a severe winter storm. On average, Illinois experiences five severe winter storms each year. Severe winter storms can cause widespread damage and disruption. Heavy snow often results in paralyzed transportation systems, automobile accidents due to slippery roads and stranded vehicles. Glazing from ice storms topples utility lines and poles and makes travel virtually impossible. When accompanied by intense winds and extreme cold, snow can isolate entire towns. These conditions are a dangerous threat to life. Glazing from ice storms topples utility lines and poles and makes travel virtually impossible. Even walking may be a dangerous venture. There are some things you can do both at work and at home to prepare and minimize the hazards of the winter season.

1. Know the Weather Terms Used by the National Weather Service – Knowing these terms will help you prepare for a Chicago winter.

Blizzard Warning -- Snow and strong winds will combine to produce blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts, and life threatening wind chill.

Heavy Snow Warning -- Snowfall of six inches or more.

Ice Storm Warning -- Heavy accumulations of ice will create extremely dangerous travel and damage trees and power lines.

Snow Advisory -- Snowfall of three to five inches.

Wind Chill -- A calculation of how cold it feels outside when the effects of temperature and wind speed are combined.

Wind Chill Advisory -- Dangerous wind chills of 30 to 50 below zero

Wind Chill Warning -- Life threatening wind chills of 50 below zero.

Winter Storm Warning -- Indicates severe winter weather conditions are occurring, imminent, or highly likely. Stay indoors!

Winter Storm Watch -- Indicates severe winter weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible within the next day or two.

Winter Weather Advisory -- Indicates winter weather conditions will cause significant inconveniences and may be hazardous, especially to motorists. Use caution!

2. Help keep pathways at Fermilab clear - Fermilab's Roads & Grounds Department is responsible for snow removal. Building managers are consulted on an annual basis to develop priorities for pathway clearance. However, **road plowing is their top priority**. If walkways and doorways in your area need clearing, please help out. In some cases salt and/or shovels have been made available for your use. *[WARNING! Avoid shoveling if you cannot do so safely.]* Contact your building manager if you would like additional ice/snow removal equipment.

3. Be Prepared for Road Closures – The highly traveled roads at Fermilab (e.g., Batavia Rd, Pine Rd, etc.) will be the first to be plowed. That could mean that when there is a heavy snowfall, Roads and Grounds will close some of the secondary roads on site, while they concentrate the primary roads. During overnight absences please park in long-term lots provided in the Village. Most lots also have assigned spaces for Government vehicles. Please make every effort to park these vehicles there to help reduce the snow removal effort in the primary lots.

4. Walk carefully - Instead of walking heel to toe, take short flat steps to help sustain your balance. Use handrails wherever available. Wear boots with treads; add strap-on cleats if you spend a lot of time walking on ice. Leave high-heeled shoes at home. To the extent possible, stay on cleared walkways to ensure safe passage from parking lots to your work. However, be aware that paved parking lots and walkways may still be covered with a layer of ice. Occasionally, areas that had previously been melted by salt can refreeze as temperatures drop. If you see a problem like this in a parking lot, walkway or road, please call Roads and Grounds at x3303 or your building manager.

5. Dress for the Weather - The wind chill is a measure of the combined effect of cold and wind on exposed flesh. The lower the wind chill, the less time it takes to cause frostbite or hypothermia.



Wear loose fitting, lightweight, warm clothing in several layers (the trapped air between the layers insulates). Layers can be removed to avoid perspiration and subsequent chill.



Wear outer garments that are tightly woven, water repellent and hooded.



Wear a hat (half of the body heat is lost through the top of the head).



Wear mitten that are snug at the wrist. Mitten offer better protection from the cold than gloves. Gloves allow your fingers to cool much faster than mittens do.



Cover the mouth and nose with scarves to help protect lungs from cold air.



Attempt to keep your feet as dry as possible.

5. Have a Winter Storm Survival Kit in your Car – This is especially important if you are expecting to travel long distances. Things to include are:



Windshield scraper and brush



Flashlight w/ extra batteries



First aid kit



Can and waterproof matches to melt snow for drinking



Booster cables and tow rope



Tool kit and knife



Blankets/sleeping bag



High-calorie, non-perishable food



Shovel



Sack of sand or kitty litter



Extra clothing



Large can and plastic cover with tissues and paper towels for sanitary purposes

And whether at home or at work, if you use a space heater, use according to manufacturers' instructions. Keep combustibles away from the heater. Do not leave heater running unattended.

WEATHER-RELATED INFORMATION - Up-to-date winter weather-related information is available at <http://www.icepack.org/>. If the weather is severe enough that there is some question about whether or not the Lab is open, a notice will be posted in red on the Fermilab at work page: <http://www.fnal.gov/faw/>. Closing information can also be obtained from the following broadcast stations or via the Fermilab severe weather hotline at 1-630-840-5995.